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NOTES AND QUERIES.

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC IN THE KENTUCKY MOUNTAINS: SOME CURIOUS FOLK-SURVIVALS. — Sympathetic magic in eastern Kentucky groups itself into two leading divisions, — witchcraft in its various forms, and the more ancient belief in charms. Half a century ago the belief in witchcraft and charms was more prevalent in eastern Kentucky than it is at present; but the shadow of such superstitious beliefs is yet strong enough to offer some interesting examples. Here are some of the things witches do in the Kentucky mountains. They transform certain individuals into horses and ride them all night, restoring the bewitched to their natural shapes before daylight: later, complaint of the jumping of ditches, fences, etc., is often made by the victims. Only the form of the bewitched is changed, and his rational attributes remain intact throughout. Witches do not confine themselves to working the black art upon human beings, but bewitch animals and inanimate objects as well. Cows are bewitched; and their owners complain that they are not "giving down" milk, whereas the cows belonging to witches are continually yielding a plentiful supply. Even a churn can be bewitched, and in order to break the spell a silver coin is placed in the bottom of it; but a witch can have plenty of butter always convenient and at hand, because she is able to produce the creamy substance by merely squeezing the handle of an ordinary table-fork.

Sympathetic magic in its essence is illustrated by the image or pictograph resorted to by witches. The picture of the victim crudely scrawled upon a tree, or something else, by a witch who wishes to work the black art, does not mean much unless the witch-ball or hair-ball is used. A witch can take a person's life with this "dangerous ammunition." A small bunch of hair from a horse or cow is rolled between the two hands into a small round ball, and this ball is used as a bullet. In whatever part the ball hits the picture, in the corresponding part of the victim a wound is inflicted. In Knott County, several years ago, a man was ploughing in the field and suddenly dropped dead between his plough-handles. It was a strange case, and doubtless never would have been solved, had it not been for a single piece of undeniable evidence. When he fell dead, a witch-ball dropped out of his mouth. This was enough. The case was investigated, and it was found that a wizard, jealous of the victim, had gone into the woods, drawn his victim's picture upon a tree, taken aim, and shot a witch-ball into the mouth represented in the picture.

Witches often metamorphose themselves into black cats and toads when they go about their mischief-making. For this reason it is bad luck to injure a black cat or a toad. If you kill a toad, the witches will cause your cows to "give down" bloody milk. Witches themselves sometimes suffer painful injuries. Many years ago a man's wife left home at dark to attend a meeting of the witches. In the guise of a black cat she came home to where her husband was sitting by the fireside, and threw her paws upon his knees. He chopped off one of her paws, and immediately the hand of a woman lay upon his knee. The next morning the wife feigned illness and did not arise. The husband was suspicious, and asked her to hold out her right hand. She extended the right arm, but the hand was missing.

The old transaction, bartering away one's soul to Satan, has undergone some changes. In eastern Kentucky, one who desires to become a witch goes before sunrise to the summit of an adjacent mountain. As soon as the sun begins to appear above the distant horizon, and as soon as the aspirant has hurled a trine anathema at Jehovah, and owned the Devil as a master, she holds up a white handkerchief in front of it, shoots through the 'kerchief with a silver bullet, and blood drops from it. The operation is then complete.

According to the folk-conception in the Kentucky mountains, the witch or wizard may or may not become the prey of the Demon of Evil. So long as he remains in the power of the Evil Spirit, and rejects the intercession of the Holy Spirit, he may be said to be sinning against the Holy Ghost, and consequently is lost. However, a witch or wizard may renounce his demoniacal vow, completely reform, and live on an equality with his fellow-men, and be saved.

In eastern Kentucky, men claim the power to work the black art, and are as carefully avoided as are the witches. In the Kentucky mountains, there are few, if any, instances of the use of herbs or roots, or of mandrake or briony, with which to fashion images of persons whom a witch may wish to consume; but witches are known to use a great many herbs for various purposes.

There are two ways of protecting one's self against witches, — by soliciting the services of a witch doctor, and by resorting to charms. The witch doctor has many ways by means of which he or she may break the spell of witchcraft. As soon as one's charm begins to work, the witch begins to suffer intense physical agony, and soon comes bearing a gift of some sort to the bewitched person or to the owner of a bewitched animal. If the gift is accepted, the charm loses its efficacy the moment it is accepted. The gun-barrel charm, in which the barrel of a gun is placed in a stream of water, first up stream and then down, has been known to give witches a great deal of unpleasantness. The gun-barrel method is as follows: "Aussitôt qu'on devient ensorcelé, il fait partir quelqu'un immédiatement au docteur en sorcellerie. Le docteur porte un mousquet au bord d'un petit courant certain. Il sépare la monture et le canon de fusil. Premièrement il place le canon de fusil dans l'eau, contre le courant. Aussitôt qu'il le fait, la sorcière commence vomir terriblement. Alors le docteur renverse le canon de fusil, et la sorcière commence excréter terriblement. Sur ces entrefaites la sorcière envoie un messenger au docteur, suppliant piteusement. Le messenger fait plusieurs voyages en suppliant le docteur, pendant que celui-ci fait ceci et ça, *et patati et patata* avec le canon de fusil. Il ricochait, il ricochait! Enfin la magicienne se trouve dans difficulté violente, le docteur en sorcellerie avec compassion déplace le canon de fusil de dessous le courant, la sorcière devient en avoir plus qu'assez, et le vers magique de sorcellerie se rompt."

No one except the bewitched can see a transformed witch, and no other person save the bewitched can injure a witch by shooting her. This must be done by using a silver bullet. This is a seemingly paradoxical folk-conception, that a silver bullet can create a witch and in the same breath exterminate her. A silver bullet was used by a hunter in Cornwall to shoot a rabbit that had escaped all the leaden bullets shot at it. The rabbit was shot in one of the thighs by a silver bullet, and was pursued by the

hunters, but could not be found anywhere. Finally one of the hunters came upon a withered old hag crouching behind a bowlder. She was led out limping. Scott gives a charm against witchcraft, which consists in spitting into the shoe of the right foot before putting it on. If I am not mistaken, this charm has been resorted to in eastern Kentucky.

The second division of sympathetic magic, charms, is covered by a number of superstitions in the Kentucky mountains. We find charms against inflammation, carnivorous fowls, droughts, spirits or ghosts, warts, and many kinds of diseases. The charm against inflammation has been worked by quoting these three lines (also an old English charm):—

“There were two angels came from the East;
One brought fire, the other frost:
Out fire, in frost!”

If a hawk is catching your chickens, get a stone from the bottom of the creek-bed and place it in the bottom of the grate. Kill a black snake and hang it up, and rain will come within twelve hours (compare the Bushman rain-charms among the Semang tribes of East Malacca). There is a current belief that scrofula in an infant can be cured by allowing another child, one whose father died before it was born, to blow its breath into the mouth of the sick infant. Charms for making one love you are many. One of them consists in boiling the paddle of a goose's foot and giving the water to your “best girl.”

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CROW RAPID-SPEECH PUZZLES. — It may be of interest to note that the Crow Indians have stereotyped sentences or phrases corresponding to our “She sells sea-shells by the seashore.” One person recites these as rapidly as possible and calls on another to do likewise; owing to the peculiar juxtaposition of phonetic elements, confusion and mispronunciation generally result. Naturally enough, these sentences are not fraught with profound meaning. The best-known illustration is the following.

Bàs'akapupéc-dà+uc (1) àkapupapá'pat'dēt'ek' (2); that is, “My people who went to the Nez Percé (1), you are the ones who wear belts tied round the blanket in Nez Percé fashion (2).”

Grammatical Explanation. — Bàs, “my;” ak, prefix indicating *nomen actoris*; apupé, Nez Percé (apé, “nose;” u'pé, “hole”); c, suffix denoting direction toward; dà (de), “he goes;” u, plural suffix; c, suffix giving meaning of definiteness, generally used with individual names and to bind together several elements of a phrase. àk, “nomen actoris;” apup (é), Nez Percé; apá'pat', designation for this particular style of wearing the belt and blanket; dē, “you have;” t, suffix denoting similarity to the preceding word (for example, micg'ē't'k' [micg'ē, “dog:” k', oral stop], “like a dog”); ē', connective; k', oral stop. This interpretation of the second complex by Yellow-Brow is not convincing to me, for my best interpreter regarded the *det'* as a single element, the privative particle. This would change the translation to “they are the ones who have not Nez Percé blanket-belts.” I have heard the connective *ē* dropped, with concomitant shortening of the preceding syllable (*dēt'k'*); also the plural suffix in the first word-complex is sometimes dispensed with, giving *dēc* instead of *dà+uc*.